

The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I object.

We look forward to having a very healthy and serious debate on this issue in the Armed Services Committee so that we can resolve many claims by both sides about the best way to deal with this.

I think, through Senator GILLIBRAND's great efforts, we have moved a long, long way in terms of addressing the issue of sexual assault through the UCMJ, but there are still significant issues that have to be thoughtfully discussed. In the context of that discussion, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO MICHAEL MARTINEZ

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, it is Thursday, and it is that time of the week. I know a lot of our reporters in the Senate like this because it is the signal of kind of the end of the workweek here. Of course, it is also a signal that I get to come to the floor and do what is one of my favorite elements about being a U.S. Senator: talking about someone who makes Alaska what I believe to be the greatest State in the country. We call this person our Alaskan of the Week.

Before I get to talking about our Alaskan of the Week—an extraordinary young man named Michael Martinez—let me tell you a little bit about what is going on in Alaska right now.

Today, in Anchorage, the Sun rose at 4:44 a.m., and it will set tonight at 11 p.m. It was light almost all day. Blackout curtains are up, and 12 midnight Sun celebrations are abounding. It is a great time of the year to be in Alaska. You can't believe the energy you feel.

We were recently able to pass a cruise ship bill—and I appreciate the Presiding Officer's doing that a couple of weeks ago—that enables cruise ships to come back to our State this summer. So we are going to have tourists coming, and you should, too, America. If you are watching on C-SPAN, come on up. Alaska is safe. It is beautiful. If it is on your bucket list, make it happen this summer. You will love it. You will see breathtaking scenery and some of the most generous, innovative people in the country. You will not be disappointed. So come on up.

You will be in a State where 21-year-old Michael Martinez, our Alaskan of the Week, was born and raised—one of the many, many reasons I remain optimistic about the state of our State and the state of our country. So let me tell you a little bit about Michael.

His mother, Mary, is from the village of Kotlik in the Yukon-Kuskokwim

Delta. She is Yupik. His father, Eufemio, is from Central Mexico. So those two met and married in Anchorage, and that is where Michael was raised.

As I said, he is 21 years old now and has one more year to go before he receives his bachelor of science degree in chemistry from the University of Alaska Anchorage—a great university. Although he has been very successful so far in his already having won many awards for his research, he plans on going to graduate school. There is so much for him to study, after all, and his interest in science runs very deep, as it has since he was a young boy when he began winning science fairs.

An Alaska reporter wrote a story in 2016—so 5 years ago—already documenting then young Michael's successes. The first award was for an experiment demonstrating how weight and length affect the throwing distance of traditional hunting spears used by Alaska Natives. Isn't that a cool research topic? In eighth grade, he won an award for designing a robot.

Eventually, he moved on to bigger and better things, like, at the tender age of 16, trying to find a cure for cancer and getting mentorship from his high school teachers at Service High School in Anchorage and, very importantly, in the Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program—what we call ANSEP—in Alaska. He won the Emperor Science Award, which is a prestigious science research award offered through PBS Learning Media and Stand Up to Cancer.

Michael worked with his mentor, Dr. Holly Martinson, Ph.D., from the University of Alaska Anchorage, to make a database for Alaska Natives suffering from cancer. It was his introduction to the world of research, and he fell in love with it. He entered ANSEP.

Let me talk to you a little bit about ANSEP. It is a program that attracts young Alaska Native students from all over Alaska and provides extraordinary educational opportunities for them in science, in the STEM fields. ANSEP students have been enormously successful and have gone on to do incredible, incredible things. I can't say enough about this tremendous program.

Eventually, Michael was introduced to another mentor, Dr. Brandon Briggs, a professor of biological sciences and the director of the Advanced Instrumentation for Microbiome Studies. It was his work at Dr. Briggs' lab that led him to his current passion of finding better environmentally friendly ways to extract much needed, even critical, materials from the Earth.

Increasingly, both here in Congress and across the country, we have been focusing on metals and minerals that are needed to power our future, particularly rare earth elements and critical minerals. So much of our economic future and our national defense depends upon these minerals. The problem—although we have many of these

minerals, rare earths included, in our country and particularly in Alaska—is that our mining industry has had incredibly difficult times in terms of being able to access them, whether it be with permitting delays that take years, with far-left environmental lawsuits that prohibit the extracting of them, or with the lack of production capacity. The result is that China, like it is in so many other areas, is dominant, controlling up to 90 percent of some of these critical minerals.

Like many of the challenges we face and confront with China, we need the best minds in America working on these things. Our young minds hold the promise of our future.

That is one of the reasons we recently passed a bill right here in the Senate this week to fund research institutions, so that we can unleash this talent and creativity.

This is where our Alaskan of the Week, Michael, comes in. It was recently announced that Michael won first place in the High North Young Entrepreneur Award at the High North Dialogue, an international pitch competition for Arctic-related business ideas. Here is what he won it for: forming a company with his adviser-mentor, Dr. Briggs, called Arctic Biotech Oath, which is working on sustainably extracting rare-earth elements, as I said, which are in abundance in Alaska.

How does this work? What is the science and chemistry that he is already working on? In a lab, they are using microorganisms, fungi, which dig into the ore, breaking it up, and releasing the rare-earth element into a solution, which is a more natural and sustainable process to extract these rare-earth elements.

This process is still in research and development, but it has incredible potential for our Nation and for our State, and he has founded a company that is doing this, and Michael is just 21 years old. Michael could be anywhere doing this, but he is staying in Alaska because Alaska is home, and he is committed to contributing to our State.

That is why I'm still here. And that's why the company will be here and will be based in Alaska. I was born and raised here. I am trying to improve our State and see Alaska soar and thrive within the next couple of decades. I want to see a green energy sector evolve in Alaska.

So that is Michael. He wants to be part of this, and he is part of this at the tender age of 21.

So to Michael, thanks for all your hard work.

By the way, thanks to all the mentors in Michael's life and ANSEP and UAA, which have helped him along the way.

Good luck in your endeavors, and congratulations, Michael, for being our Alaskan of the Week.

FOREIGN POLICY

Mr. President, since this administration—the Biden administration—came into office, I and a number of Senators,